

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BELGRA 03962 011227Z

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E.O. 1165MAQPEDUYXW

TAGS: PFOR MASS YO

SUBJ: YUGOSLAV ARMS REQUESTS

REF: BELGRADE 3961

1. AT LUNCHEON JULY 31 ASST. FEDERAL SEC. DEFENSE FOR NAVY ADMIRAL MAMULA AND GENERAL ILI , DEP. ASST SECDEF FOR OPERATIONS, STRESSED REPEATEDLY YUGOSLAV DESIRE TO PURCHASE MODERN ARMS FROM THE UNITED STATES. ADMIRAL MAMULA VOICED STRONG HOPE MILITARY-TO-MILITARY RELATIONS WOULD CONTINUE TO EXPAND AND BE STRENGTHENED. HE WELCOMED PRESIDENT FOR'S FORTHCOMING VISIT AND SAID HE HOPED IT MIGHT ALSO INCLUDE SOME WORDS ON YUGOSLAVIA'S ARMS REQUEST. IN THIS REGARD, HE RPT HE OBSERVED THAT THERE SEEMED TO BE MOVEMENT IN WASHINGTON ON THIS MATTER AND YUGOSLAVS HOPED THIS WOULD CONTINUE TO PROGRESS. AMBASSADOR RESPONDED IN GENERALITIES ONLY.

2. IN ANSWER TO AMBASSADOR'S QUESTION ON POSSIBLE SOVIET MOTIVES FOR SUPPLYING ARMS, ADMIRAL MAMULA ACKNOWLEDGED THAT IT WAS PERHAPS TO HAVE SOME INFLUENCE OVER YUGOSLAVIA. HE STRESSED THAT SUCH AN EFFORT WOULD NEVER SUCCEED. REVIEWING THE HISTORY OF THE YUGOSLAV ARMY, ITS ARMS PURCHASES AND ITS DIFFICULTIES WITH FOREIGN COUNTRIES BEGINNING IN 1948, BOTH ADMIRAL MAMULA AND GENERAL ILIC EMPHASIZED THAT THE FACT OF LARGE ARMS PURCHASES AND TRAINING IN

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PAGE 02 BELGRA 03962 011227Z

THE SOVIET UNION HAD NEVER AFFECTED THE BASIC LOYALTY AND COMMIT-

MENT OF THE YUGOSLAV ARMED FORCES TO PRESERVATION OF YUGOSLAV INDEPENDENCE AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY.

3. HAVING RECALLED THAT YUGOSLAV REQUESTS FOR ARMS HAD BEEN REFUSED IN VARIOUS WESTERN COUNTRIES ON VARIOUS GROUNDS, ADMIRAL MAMULA SAID BASIC YUGOSLAV POLICY IS TO PRODUCE AS MUCH DOMESTICALLY AS POSSIBLE, BUT YUGOSLAVIA MUST NEVERTHELESS PURCHASE SOPHISTICATED MILITARY EQUIPMENT ABROAD. BOTH MAMULA AND ILIC ACKNOWLEDGED THE DANGER OF HEAVY PURCHASES FROM ONE COUNTRY. MAMULA OBLIQUELY INDICATED THAT ANOTHER RUSSIAN MOTIVE WAS TO FULLY UNDERSTAND GOY MILITARY TECHNOLOGY AND THAT IN SUCH CASES AS WITH MISSILES IT IS BAD FOR A FOREIGN COUNTRY TO KNOW THE EXACT FREQUENCIES ON WHICH SUCH EQUIPMENT OPERATES. YUGOSLAVS ARE WELL AWARE OF THIS AND IT IS VERY EXPENSIVE FOR THEM TO ALTER THOSE FREQUENCIES AND REDUCE VULNERABILITY TO LOWEST POSSIBLE POINT.

4. AMBASSADOR RECALLED YUGOSLAV SAYING THAT IT IS SOMETIMES NECESSARY TO KILL A MOUSE TO PREVENT THE ELEPHANT FROM ENTERING THE HOUSE. BOTH MAMULA AND ILIC ACKNOWLEDGED THAT "ELEPHANT" COULD READ THE SAME AS "BEAR", E.E. THE SOVIET UNION.

5. IN THIS CONNECTION, DURING DISCUSSION AT RECEPTION JULY 28 GENERAL ILIC IN A SURPRISINGLY FRANK DISCUSSION ACKNOWLEDGED TO AMBASSADOR THAT YUGOSLAVS SAW NO CONCERN ABOUT INVASION FROM THE WEST. ILIC DESCRIBED YUGOSLAV CONCERN ABOUT NATO MANEUVERS LAST YEAR ON GROUNDS THEY PROVIDED POLITICAL SUPPORT FOR ITALIANS; HE FURTHER IMPLIED THAT DISCUSSIONS OF THREATS FROM THE WEST WERE POLITICAL RATHER THAN REPRESENTING A REAL CONCERN TO THE YUGOSLAV ARMY.

6. COMMENT. WHILE MUCH OF WHAT MAMULA AND ILIC SAID IS NOT ENTIRELY NEW, WE WERE STRUCK BY THE FRANKNESS, PARTICULARLY VIS-A-VIS SOVIETS, AND THE TONE OF NEAR PLEADING WHICH BOTH YUGOSLAV OFFICERS EVIDENCED IN REQUESTING US ARMS. IT WAS ALSO HIGHLY UNUSUAL FOR THESE MILITARY OFFICERS TO SPEND THREE AND A HALF HOURS AT LUNCH. PART OF THEIR MOTIVATION, OF COURSE, WAS TO HAVE SOME POSSIBLE INFLUENCE ON THE PRESIDENT'S VISIT. WE NOTE IN THIS CONNECTION, ALSO, A REPORT OF ARREST OF ADDITIONAL COMINFORMISTS (REFTEL). WHILE WE DO NOT WISH TO EXAGGERATE,

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 BELGRA 03962 011227Z

PLEADING TONE DURING AMBASSADOR'S CONVERSATION WOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH APPARENTLY RECENT YUGOSLAV NERVOUSNESS OVER SOVIET MOTIVES AND ACTIVITIES.
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